

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

OMB-01 EUR-25 SCCT-02 AID-20 NIC-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /142 W
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O 131600Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3831

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANAA 1168

E.O. 11652: GDS: PINS, PFOR, YE, IZ, SA

SUBJ: YARG POLITICAL CRISIS FLARES IN WAKE OF IRAQI
CONSPIRACY DISCOVERY

REF: SANAA 1147

DEPT PASS BAGHDAD

1. SUMMARY: YARG PRESIDENT IRYANI RESIGNED JNE 13 AS
RESULT POLITICAL CONFRONTATION WITH CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY
PRESIDENT SHAIKH ABDULLAH BIN HUSSEIN AL-AHMAR. LATTER
HAS ASSEMBLED HIS TRIBAL FORCES NORTH OF SANAA AND IS
THREATENING TO OCCUPY CAPITAL. ARMY IS POSITIONING ITS
UNITS TO RESIST. PRESIDENT AND OTHER RESPONSIBLE LEADERS
BELIEVE SAUDI ARABIAN AMBASSADOR WITH SOME SUPPORT FROM ELEMENTS IN
HIS OWN COUNTRY IS BEHIND EFFORT BRING ABOUT PRESIDENT'S
REMOVAL. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKS THAT US PASS YARG
MESSAGE TO SAG (PRINCES FAHD AND SULTAN) SEEKING THEIR
QTE GOOD OFFICES UNQTE IN PREVENTING ANTICIPATED
ARMY-TRIBAL CLASH. ACTION REQUESTED: URGENT TRANS-
MITTAL OF YARG MESSAGE TO SAG LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN ASNAG ASKED TO SEE ME URGENTLY AT HOME

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THIS AFTERNOON. HE DESCRIBED FLASH POLITICAL CRISIS

WHICH AS DEVELOPED IN WAKE OF GOVERNMENT'S DISCOVERY OF IRAQI CONSPIRACY AGAINST PRESIDENT IRYANI AND PRESENT YARG (REFTEL). BECAUSE OF THE BYZANTINE COMPLEXITY OF YEMENI POLITICS I AM HERE GREATLY SIMPLIFYING HIS PRESENTATION.

3. FOLLOWING MAY VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA BY PRIMIN MAKKI AND PARTY, PRESIDENT IRYANI HAD BEEN HOPEFUL THAT RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA WERE ABOUT TO ENTER A MORE POSITIVE PERIOD. YARG AWARE THAT SAG MISGIVINGS ABOUT MAKKI AND EVEN PRESIDENT HIMSELF NOT ENTIRELY ALLAYED BUT TOOK COMFORT FROM SAG ASSURANCES THAT IT WOULD JUDGE MAKKI'S PERFORMANCE BY ACTION TO COME. YARG ALSO HOPEFUL, BASED ON ASSURANCES FROM MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SAQQAF THAT TROUBLEMAKING SAUDI AMBASSADOR HERE, PRINCE MUSAIID BIN SUDAIRY, WOULD FINALLY BE REMOVED. UNFORTUNATELY, IT APPEARS THAT ELEMENTS WITHIN SAG UNWAVERING IN DETERMINATION EXPLOIT EVENTS TO UNSEAT BOTH PRESIDENT AND PRIMIN.

4. DESPITE APPARENTLY GOOD ATMOSPHERE ENGENDERED BY CANDID EXCHANGES DURING PRIMIN'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, SAUDI AMBASSADOR CONTINUED AND INTENSIFIED HIS CRITICISMS OF PRESIDENT AND HIS CONTACTS WITH THOSE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LEADERS WHO COULD BE USED AGAINST HIM, AMONG OTHERS MEMBERS OF FAMILY OF HODEIDA GOVERNOR SINAN ABU LUHUM, SEVERAL OF WHOM HAVE IMPORTANT MILITARY COMMANDS, AND CHIEF OF STAFF MASWARI WHO KNOWN TO BE CLOSE TO SAG.

5. A LITTLE OVER A WEEK AGO, CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AHMAR STOPPED IN JIDDA ON RETURN FROM OFFICIAL VISITS TO PRC AND NORTH KOREA. IMMEDIATELY ON RETURN, AL-AHMAR, WHO ALSO REGARDED AS RESPONSIVE TO SAUDI WISHES, BEGAN TO AGITATE AGAINST PRESIDENT. AFTER YARG'S SEIZURE OF DOCUMENTS ATTESTING AN IRAQI CONSPIRACY AIMED AT REPLACING PRESENT YARG WITH A BA'ATHI REGIME, AL-AHMAR USED PRESIDENT'S DECISION SEND HIS POLITICAL ADVISER MUHAMMAD NU'MAN TO BAGHDAD TO CONFIRNT IRAQI PRESIDENT BAKR WITSM THE EVIDENCE, RATHER THAN IMMEDIATELY SEVERING RELATIONS, AS BASIS FOR CRITICISING PRESIDENT FOR WEAK AND SECRET

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INCOMPETENT LEADERSHIP--A LINE IDENTICAL TO THAT CIRCULATED BY SAUDI AMBASSADOR. MATTERS WERE BROUGHT TO CRISIS EVENING JUNE 12 WHEN AL-AHMAR USED PRETEXT OF AN ALLEGED SLUR AGAINST TRIBAL LEADERS AND THEIR FORCES BY A REGULAR ARMY OFFICER IN PRESIDENT'S ENTOURAGE TO CONFRONT PRESIDENT WITH DEMAND THAT HE AND PRIMIN MAKKI IMMEDIATELY RESIGN. IN THIS MANEUVER HE WAS JOINED BEHIND THE SCENES BY HODEIDA GOVERNOR ABU LUMUM

WHO HAD RETURNED THAT DAY FROM VISITING HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW FORMER PRIME MINISTER AL-AYNI IN LONDON. GOVERNOR ABU LUHUM'S MOTIVATION TRANSPARENTLY TO BRING ABOUT A MAJOR POLITICAL CRISIS THAT WOULD OBSCURE REPEATED REFERENCES TO AL-AYNI IN IRAQI CONSPIRACY DOCUMENTS AS IRAQ'S CHOSEN CANDIDATE TO REPLACE PRESIDENT IRYANI.

6. AFTER DEMANDING PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION, AL-AHMAR DECAMPED TO HIS TRIBAL AREAS NORTH OF SANAA AND SUMMONED TRIBAL FORCES TO HIM.

7. MORNING JUNE 13, AS REQUIRED BY CONSTITUTION, PRESIDENT SENT HIS RESIGNATION AND THAT OF OTHER REPUBLICAN COUNCIL SENIOR STATESMAN AHMAD NU'MAN BY ENVOY TO AL-AHMAR. LATTER INFORMED ENVOY THAT HIS MASSED TRIBES INTENDED TO OCCUPY CAPITAL BY FORCE.

8. MILITARY LEADERS HAVE ALSO BEEN AT ODDS WITH PRESIDENT FOR ALLEGED LACK OF DECISIVENESS IN DEALING WITH IRAQI CONSPIRACY ISSUE, ON WHICH THEY ONLY SLIGHTLY MOLLIFIED BY PRESIDENT'S WILLINGNESS SEND TO IRAQI PRESIDENT BAKR THROUGH MUHAMMAD NU'MAN A SHARPLY WORDED PERSONAL LETTER OF PROTEST. NEVERTHELESS, DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF HAMDY (WHO IS THE ONLY ONE OF THREE SENIOR COMMANDERS PRESENTLY IN COUNTRY) HAS TAKEN POSITION THAT HE WILL DEFEND CAPITAL AT ANY COST. HE HAS DEPLOYED TANKS, ARTILLERY AND REGULAR INFANTRY UNITS ON ROADS LEADING INTO CAPITAL FROM NORTH, AS WELL AS AROUND RADIO STATION AND PRINCIPAL PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN SANAA. ALL AIRPORTS HAVE BEEN CLOSED. UNFORTUNATELY, A SUBSTANTIAL INFILTRATION INTO CAPITAL OF AL-AHMAR'S ARMED TRIBESMEN APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE BEFORE HAMDY'S FORCES PUT IN PLACE.

9. PRESIDENT IRYANI, IN MEANWHILE, HAS LEFT THE CAPITAL
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FOR TAIZ TO REMOVE HIMSELF AS FOCAL POINT FOR OPPOSITION OF TRIBES AND PRETEXT FOR THEIR THREATENED SEIZURE OF CAPITAL.

10. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO KEEP CHANNEL OF DISCUSSION WITH AL-AHMAR OPEN TO AVOID DISASTROUS ARMY-TRIBAL FIGHT FOR POSSESSION OF CAPITAL.

11. NOTING AGAIN THAT SAG UNDOUBTEDLY HAS THE CAPACITY

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED BAGHDAD

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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O 131600Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3832

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IMMEDIATELY TO INFLUENCE AL-AHMAR, FONMIN ASKED THAT USG URGENTLY CONVEY TO PRINCE FAHD, WHO SHOWS GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF YEMEN AND TO PRINCE SULTAN, WHO SHOWS MUCH LESS, YARG MESSAGE AS FOLLOWS: (IN SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE) YAR REGULAR FORCES INTEND OPPOSE TRIBAL ELEMENTS BY FORCE. SINCE THIS IS AN INTERNAL MATTER, YARG SEEKS ASSURANCE THAT IN EVENT OF A CLASH SAUDI ARABIA WILL NOT INTERVENE. ALTERNATIVELY AND PREFERABLY FOR ALL CONCERNED, YARG HOPES THAT SAG WILL USE ITS GOOD OFFICES BY ALL APPROPRIATE MEANS TO PREVENT TRIBAL FORCES FROM PRECIPITATING ARMED CONFLICT. ONLY SURE RESULT OF SUCH CONFLICT WOULD BE A WEAKENING OF MODERATE LEADERSHIP IN YEMEN AND A CONCOMITANT STRENGTHENING OF THOSE LEFT WING FORCES WHICH YARG AND SAG JOINTLY OPPOSE.

12. ASNAG SAID MUHAMMAD NU'MAN, PRESENTLY IN BEIRUT, WOULD BE ASKED COME TO JIDDA EVENING JUNE 13 TO DO WHATEVER HE COULD IN SUPPORT OF YARG REQUEST THAT SAG USE ITS INFLUENCE OVER AL-AHMAR CONSTRUCTIVELY.

13. I POINTED OUT TO ASNAG THAT CURRENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA BY PRESIDENT NIXON AND SECRETARY KISSINGER WOULD MAKE CONSIDERATION BY SAG OF ANY OTHER ISSUE VERY SECRET

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DIFFICULT DURING COMING HOURS. I PROMISED HOWEVER RELAY
HIS MESSAGE ON AN URGENT BASIS.

14. FONMIN SAID PRESIDENT IRYANI HAD ORDERED THAT HIS
MESSAGE OF RESIGNATION SPECIFYING THREATS OF
CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AND USE OF FORCE BY
TRIBES BE BROADCAST AT 8:00 PM THIS EVENING. HOWEVER,
FOLLOWING PRESIDENT'S DEPARTURE FOR TAIZ, HE AND OTHER
LEADERS HAD ORDERED INFORMATION MINISTRY
DIFFER ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR CONCILIATION
EFFORTS.

15. WOULD SEEM CLEARLY CONSTRUCTIVE
FOR THE SITUATION HERE FOR US TO PASS ASNAG'S MESSAGE
AS REQUESTED. I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF
ACTION TAKEN AND SAG REACTION.
CRAWFORD

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Message Attributes

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